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Teaching Character Through a Sixth Grade English Club

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THE child-centered school finds its basis in the theory that the child learns and develops through activities growing out of his own interests. The new education consists of "self actuated work, freedom with responsibility, real experience with actual material, opportunity for varied expression, emphasis upon the individual, and yet recognition that the individual grows only as a member of the social group."¹

The aim of previous educators was to prepare the child for adaptation and conformity to the needs of adult life. Such an aim produced a school procedure that was mechanical, impersonal, uncreative, and joyless. The method consisted of drill, discipline, learning hard, unpleasant, uninteresting, abstract lessons, motivated only by the far distant future need for making a living. To teach with such aims in view was easy, simple, definite, and joyless. The materials needed in such a school were few; screwed down desks, books, and pencils. The children had to sit in their seats silently, with hands folded.

Today we say, "Let the child learn to do by doing. Let him experience things, make, do, create anything he feels within him. Let him express himself fearlessly and joyfully. Let

him dare to do and be unafraid. Let him live today in the present."

Each child is an individual, a personality, a growing, developing, ever changing, human being having within him untold possibilities. He has desires to fulfill, interests to express, conflicts to settle, and responsibilities to carry. To teach children today requires guidance, ingenuity, initiative, wisdom, skill, and understanding. It requires the teacher to help the child express the potentialities latent within him. Such teaching is difficult, often perplexing, and — fascinating.

The development of character and personality is attendant to other learnings which take place in a socialized environment where activity is the process by which the learning takes place.

The purpose of this report is to present the activities that grew out of a sixth grade English club and its effects upon the characters and personalities of the children.

The English Club

The English club is organized for the purpose of presenting interesting weekly programs. The officers consist of a president, vice-president, secretary, five captains, and five critics. Each captain leads a group which is composed of both girls and boys. Every

¹ Harold Rugg and Ann Shumaker. *THE CHILD-CENTERED SCHOOL*, p. 44. Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1928.

child belongs to some group. Each group is represented by one critic and the five critics have one of their members as chairman. A meeting is held every week during which fifteen minutes are spent for business and thirty minutes allowed for the program. Once a week the children are given fifteen minutes during which to plan and practice their programs. After the program is presented it is criticised by various members of the class. Both the qualities and weaknesses are definitely pointed out. All the critics (except the one whose group is giving the program) give marks for the group as a whole. The chairman of the critics, in giving his report, presents the average of those marks. The critics must mark upon a very definite basis as outlined by the class. The following factors are considered essential to a good program:

Factor	Per cent
1. Cooperation	30
2. Preparation	25
3. Originality	20
4. Expression	15
5. Posture	10
Total	100

Such an organization brings children face to face with real and urgent problems. Needs are felt and methods devised to satisfy those needs. They not only have to solve specific problems that come up with every program presented, but they learn how to use to the fullest capacity the talents of every child within the group. Every individual is responsible for the welfare and success of the group and the achievement of the individual is the concern of the entire group.

In glancing through the minutes of the club we find the following motions passed. These indicate some of the problems that the children have to solve.

1. The secretary should write her minutes in more detail.
2. Any member has the privilege of asking what each critic marked the group.
3. It was decided that a patent office should be established composed of a chairman and a representative of each group. If the group does not use its patent privileges for two months any group may use the ideas patented.

4. Critics sitting or conferring with members of the class during a program shall be removed from office.
5. Any group leaving properties from the play in the cloak-room will have ten per cent deducted from the final mark.
6. The class should have a newspaper reporting all English club and class-room activities. A staff should be appointed to get out the paper.
7. A committee should be appointed to make a curtain for the room to be used whenever the club may not use the auditorium.
8. A moving committee should be appointed to arrange the furniture for the group giving the program.
9. There should be not more than three remarks to a motion so that too much time is not spent for one motion.

Every group is constantly faced with countless problems. Let us visit a group at work and follow the preparations made for one program. In the first place it must decide what kind of a program to give. Various suggestions are made and discussed. In one case the majority decide to give a puppet show. A committee is appointed to go to the library to get books telling how the stage and puppets should be made and manipulated. Another committee is appointed to write a play that can be used for the puppet show. At the next meeting the reports are given. The play committee describes just what kind of puppets and furniture will be needed, while the library committee tells how they should be made. Various members are appointed to make and dress the puppets and to build the stage. One girl states that she has all kinds of scraps for dressing the dolls and she will be glad to contribute them to the group. At the next meeting everyone reports, bringing his share of the properties needed. Only John gives some excuse. The captain reprimands him severely and the entire group seems displeased with him. He is uncomfortable. Public opinion is against him. He resolves to make the little table assigned to him and bring it at the next meeting. A rehearsal of the play begins. The curtain does not open wide enough. An extra hook is needed with which to fasten it. Margaret's voice is too

harsh for the baby's part. She will have to be the aunt and let Jean take the other part. Everything is working nicely now. The electric footlights, obtained by using Christmas tree lights, make the stage look fine. The group is delighted. Perhaps they will be permitted to give the play to another grade. Now the rehearsal is timed. Alas, it only takes twelve minutes to give the entire program. The program should take half an hour. Betty suggests that three girls sing the "Wedding of the Painted Doll," while she plays the accompaniment on the piano. Jerry volunteers to give a book report on Tony Sarg and his marionettes. The idea occurs to Jane that if they had refreshments it would take five minutes to pass them out and would improve the program. A committee is appointed to ask the principal permission to pass out refreshments. Money is collected and a committee appointed to prepare the refreshments. At the next meeting a final rehearsal takes place. The refreshment committee has decided to make puppets by using a fig-newton cake for the body, a prune for the head, and raisins stuck on tooth picks for arms and legs. During the fifth week the group presents its play and the other features of its program. The class members give their criticisms and the critics mark them. During the following week new plans for another program begin again.

Where is the teacher all this time? She goes from group to group giving advice and making suggestions as needed. Five groups are busy in different parts of the room, talking, planning, discussing, and working. Does everything run smoothly? No, of course not. Conflicts arise; disagreements must be settled, and learning takes place. Is it quiet in the room? Can the dropping of a pin be heard? No, of course not; and who wants to hear a pin drop? We are in a work-room and everyone is busy at some task. The hum of the work-shop is heard.

Effects of English Club Activities Upon Character and Personality Traits

Working together in a group for the welfare of all requires cooperation, unselfishness,

and hard work. Planning group activities necessitates constant adaptation and results in innumerable social contacts. It is essential for the happiness of the child to learn to get along with others, to share his ideas and property, and also to accept other children's ideas.

Satisfaction and self confidence are gained when ideas are carried out in practice. The difficulties encountered and the experiences that occur add to the child's insight into problems and social contacts that are a part of life's experiences.

Appreciation of the necessity of carrying responsibilities is brought clearly to the child by the attitude of the group to whom he is responsible. Social approval guides his conduct and helps him to form habits of doing his share.

Children's sensitive natures often are afraid of being laughed at. They conform to group ways and accept group ideas because the expression of some original idea may bring about ridicule. When opportunity and encouragement are given for original expression, children drop their inhibitions and, unafraid, let their ideas and imagination hold sway.

Planning one group program gives children more opportunity to become acquainted with others than sitting in the same class-room with them for a year. Prejudices and false impressions about other children are often changed upon closer contact with them. The social distance, due to differences in sex, religion, race, or economic status, decreases, and appreciation of the individual himself results.

One of the outstanding benefits derived from the English club is the poise and self confidence that comes with the experience of talking or acting before a class. Only repeated experience will enable most individuals to face a group without self-consciousness and permit them to think on their feet. Many children, who at first stuttered and shivered before the class, have found themselves by losing themselves in the character they portrayed in a play. The surprise was

as great to them as it was to others. They did not know it was in them, and the self confidence and courage that resulted can not be over-rated.

*Children's Expression of the
Benefits Derived from English Club*

In order to get the children's ideas of what values they believe were received from the English club, the teacher stated that the English club seemed to take so much time that she did not know whether or not she should continue with it the following year. This statement caused much excitement in the class, everyone insisting that it must be continued. Papers were passed out and each child was given twenty minutes during which time to write a letter telling what the English club had done for him. Eighty children wrote letters and the findings were tabulated. (See Table I.) Some of the letters were most revealing and showed that in many cases children have insight into their own weaknesses and progress. Some quotations from the letters follow Table I.

TABLE I
THE GAINS CHILDREN CLAIM THEY
DERIVED FROM HAVING AN ENGLISH CLUB

1. Poise—ability to stand before people
2. Cooperation
3. Learned how to get along with people
4. Improved in dramatic ability
5. Improved in English.
6. Increased vocabulary
7. Learned to give in sometimes
8. Learned to like people
9. Gained in self-control
10. Learned how to give and take criticism
11. Learned how to write original plays, poems, jokes, riddles
12. Learned the importance of being dependable and carrying responsibilities
13. Learned to bring properties for other members of the group
14. Learned parliamentary procedure
15. Learned to respect officers
16. Developed a taste for different types of plays
17. Learned to be more tactful
18. Formed the habit of learning long parts
19. Learned the importance of being fair in marking
20. Learned to be prompt
21. Learned how to develop and carry out original

ideas

22. Learned to plan programs that children liked
23. Learned how to make last minute changes when necessary
24. Learned how to make extemporaneous speeches
25. Learned to know children and make more friends.

1. When I first started the English club I was timid and bashful. I was afraid to talk before the class. It seemed that I did not know them well enough. Now I always try to get a part in the play. I am not afraid to perform before large groups of persons. In this way it has helped my feeling towards other people. I thought they would laugh at me but I soon found out that they listened to me in earnest. It helped me to know people better. By the way they performed it showed me their attitudes towards certain things. For instance, I learned that Robert B. liked to give big things and make them go over right, and saw that they went over right. It helped me to change my attitude towards people and I made more friends.

2. I have never been unusually quiet or bashful, but I also have never been really nervy. English club has taught me to make any kind of extemporaneous speech or form of entertainment. It has taught me to talk or act before an audience without hesitating or becoming frightened.

3. The English club has taught me to get along with children of the group and to cooperate with them. By cooperating I mean to learn your part and work with the other members of the group trying to do all you can for the welfare of it. I have learned that dependability counts very much and it is a good feeling to think that you can depend upon someone to bring his costume and to know his part at the right time.

4. The English club has taught me words and how to use them. Last year when I used to talk with more educated children than I, I would feel that I was talking all wrong. Now I don't feel that way so much. I have also learned self control and cooperation. If I don't care for a play and I see that nearly everyone else likes it, I won't say that it is no good. I just say, "Yes, let's give that."

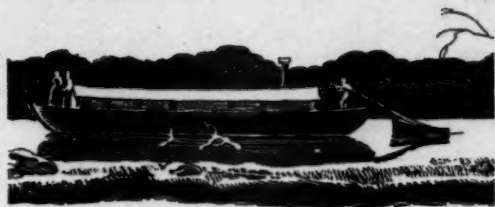
5. The English club has made many changes in me. In former years I was sort of silly, saying and doing publicity acts in the room. Now I am much more serious. I am also proud of bringing out some personalities in our group. Take Rosalind D. for example. She was regarded as a shy, timid, girl who lacked self confidence. Due to her light voice everyone thought she would fail in taking the part of a man. I told her one day that she could take part in our Lincoln play and do very well. All she needed was a little

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The Ohio River Valley in Song and Story*

MARIAN WADSWORTH

Children's Librarian, Toledo Public Library



From *THE BECKONING ROAD*. By Caroline Dale Snedeker. Doubleday, Doran.

FEW rivers have a more colorful or eventful history than the Ohio, for into its story are woven names which immediately suggest tales of heroism and adventure. Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton, George Rogers Clark, Pontiac, Mad Anthony Wayne, Rufus Putnam and many others made history in the Ohio River Valley.

Louise Hasbrouck has told us in her *LASALLE* how the French explorer penetrated the vast forests and journeyed down the swift rivers of the unknown country west of the Alleghanies coming at last to the Ohio—the “Beautiful River”—the first white man to look upon it. She has told us too, how he took possession of it and all its tributaries “in the name of Louis XIV by the grace of God, King of France and Navarre,” thus claiming for France the entire Ohio River Valley.

We can picture to ourselves this great wilderness of thick forests, sunny prairies and shining rivers; a wilderness inhabited only by Indians and wild animals, visited only by an occasional white hunter or explorer. And then, some eighty years later, we can picture this same wilderness with an occasional British settler and trader established in it, and more coming

slowly across the mountains, lured by tales of the richness and fertility of the land.

With this incursion of British settlers began a conflict for possession of the Valley of the Ohio which lasted for forty years. France immediately reasserted her claim which Great Britain just as promptly refused to acknowledge. Then Great Britain having, with the aid of her colonies, forced France to relinquish the territory, was in her turn, forced to surrender it to these same colonies now in rebellion against her. It

was a struggle so bitter, so full of cruelty and bloodshed that Kentucky came to be called the “Dark and Bloody Ground.” There was war with France, war with England and always war with the savages so deeply resentful of the white man whose passion for land was ruining their hunting grounds. Settlers were massacred, settlements wiped out, border towns burned, and everyone went in fear of hostile Indians. It is this phase of the Ohio River Valley history of which Altsheler has written in his *RIFLEMEN OF THE OHIO* and



From *SUSANNA AND TRISTRAM*. By Marjorie Hill Allee. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company.

of which we read in Bruce's *DANIEL BOONE AND THE WILDERNESS ROAD*, Skinner's *BECKY LANDERS*, Kenton's *SIMON KENTON* and Palmer's *CLARK OF THE OHIO*.

It was during this period of Indian warfare

* This article was prepared under the direction of the Chairman of the Book Evaluation Committee of the Section for Library Work with Children of the American Library Association, Miss Harriet W. Leaf. The paper was read before a meeting of the Section on Work with Children of the Ohio Library Association, at Marietta, October 2, 1931.

that the episode occurred which gave rise to what Hulbert in his *OHIO RIVER—A COURSE OF EMPIRE* calls "a fiction which is known almost as wide as the Ohio River itself"—Logan's famous speech, "I appeal to any white man to say if ever he entered Logan's cabin hungry and he gave him not meat."

According to Hulbert, a party of Indians, drunk on the white man's "firewater," were wantonly murdered by white men at Yellow Creek. Logan, an Indian, but not a chief, forced a captive to write a message to Captain Cresap, in gunpowder ink asking for an explanation of the killing. This he fastened to the handle of a tomahawk, and left at the cabin door of a murdered white settler. The message came into Simon Girty's hands; Girty translated it and passed it on to Colonel

John Gibson who "paraphrased the Bible and in part adopted the Biblical style" and sent it to Governor Dunmore in the form we all know. Governor Dunmore, in turn, sent it to Jefferson. To quote Hulbert again, "few 'orations' contain so many errors." Captain Cresap, to whom the outrage is attributed, was at least fifty miles away at the time and Logan was not left kinless. However, Hopkins in *OHIO THE BEAUTIFUL AND HISTORIC* records the speech as being made to John Gibson, a scout sent to persuade Logan to attend a peace parley, taken down by him as he listened and substantially correct in its statements.

It was also during this time of conquest and reconquest that we begin to hear much of George Rogers Clark, that young frontiersman whose colorful exploits have furnished material for so many tales. How he led his "Big Knives" in their heartbreaking march across the "drowned country" in the bitter cold and made his audacious capture of Kaskaskia and later of Vincennes, is a story ably

told in Thomas' *HERO OF VINCENNES*. A little later came Mad Anthony Wayne's campaign against the Indians ending in the decisive battle of Fallen Timbers and the treaty of Greenville of which Rupert Holland has written a vivid account in his *MAD ANTHONY*.

All this time in spite of wars and Indian disturbances and outrages, more and more settlers had been coming across the Alleghan-

ies to this new country. General Rufus Putnam had led his little band of forty-eight New Englanders across the mountains and down the Ohio to the Muskingum to found the town of Marietta. It was the first white settlement on the "Indian Shore" of the Ohio and was named in honor of Marie Antoinette. Other settlements were made—Losantiville, now Cincinnati, Gallipolis, and, after Wayne's deci-

sive defeat of the Indians, Cleveland, Dayton and Chillicothe. Life in these frail new settlements in the Indian country was a difficult, often hazardous affair of which Everson's *EARLY DAYS IN OHIO*, with its description of log cabin homes, stories of soap making, log rollings, and the hardships and dangers of pioneer life, gives us a very good picture.

More has been written of Marietta perhaps than of any other early settlement, for it was a well planned, carefully thought out venture of which General Washington said, "No colony in America was ever founded under such favorable auspices." Indeed the settlement grew rapidly. For their protection the settlers built a large wooden stockade, somewhat like a medieval keep in appearance, which was called the Campus Martius. Here Territorial Governor Arthur St. Clair took up his residence and here the first court of civil government for the Northwest Territory was opened.

On the morning when the court was opened



From *THE TOWN OF THE FEARLESS*. By Caroline Dale Snedeker. Published by Doubleday, Doran.

the judges made their way there in a stately procession led by Colonel Sproat carrying his sword in his hand. Now the Colonel was a very handsome, imposing-looking man, well over six feet tall and the onlooking Indians, extremely impressed by so much dignity, hailed him as "Big Buckeye." To this, along with the abundance of buckeye trees, Hopkins, in his *OHIO, THE BEAUTIFUL AND HISTORIC*, attributes the designation of Ohio as "The Buckeye State."

Some twelve miles down the river from Marietta is Blennerhasset Island, about which so many romantic tales have been told. To this island, then called Backus Island, Harmon Blennerhasset, an eccentric Irishman, brought his gracious young wife Margaret. He built for her a beautiful home and for a few years they lived on their island estate joyously, entertaining lavishly. Among their guests was one Aaron Burr, a suave, elegant gentleman in bad favor in the East over the killing of Alexander Hamilton. Burr's friendship flattered Blennerhasset and his eloquence persuaded him to join his ill-fated conspiracy. When the plot was discovered by the government, Blennerhasset was forced to flee from his island and when at last he was able to return he found it in such a hopelessly ruined condition that he could not stay. All his attempts to reestablish himself in the East ended in failure and he died dependent on his sister's charity.

Farther on down the river is Ripley, a famous abolitionist stronghold in the days before the Civil War. The Rankin cottage, which was known as the "first station" of the "Underground Railway" is still standing and one may see the old secret closets in which slaves were hidden when danger was near. Eliza of *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN* fame was making for Ripley in her famous dash across the river on cakes of floating ice. Eliza Harris was a real person—a slave, whose master, finding him-

self in financial difficulties, was forced to sell her along with other slaves. Fearing she would be separated from her child, Eliza ran away and when her pursuers were close behind her, took to the river in desperation, crossing on floating cakes of ice. She was sheltered at Ripley and passed on through other "stations" to safety and freedom. *SUSANNA AND TRISTRAM* by Marjorie Hill Allee, is an excellent story of the "Underground Railway," and the calm courage of the men and women who operated it.

But if the River Valley is rich in historical associations and legends, the river itself is no less so. In the old days when it flowed through the unexplored wilderness, canoes were the only craft upon it. They carried exploring white men, or missionaries, or parties of roving Indians. In pioneer days there were flatboats and keel boats carrying settlers and their household goods to their new homes; their pilots kept these boats well out from the shores lest they be boarded by hostile Indians. A little later flat boats by the thousand were being floated down to New Orleans carrying the surplus products of Ohio farms and manufacturers. All these goods being floated down the river represented a good round sum in dollars, and the lower Ohio was for a time a noted resort for bands of river pirates.

On the Illinois shore there is a large cavern with a room-like apartment above it called Cave-in-Rock about which many gruesome tales are told. Into this cavern the notorious "Wilson gang"

used to lure flatboats laden with goods destined, perhaps, for the New Orleans market. Once in the cavern, the pirates killed the captain and crew and took the boat on down the river themselves. At New Orleans both boat and goods were sold and the proceeds shared with the rest of the band. When this gang was at last broken up, sixty skeletons were found in the room over the cavern to sub-



FROM *THE BECKONING ROAD*. By Caroline Dale Snedeker. Published by Doubleday, Doran.

The Newspaper in the Elementary School¹

MARIAN M. WALSH

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Louisville, Kentucky

TO those of us who feel the extraordinary importance of the elementary school's place in our educational scheme, it has long been a source of regret that while high schools and colleges successfully foster publications among their students, few ever materialize in the grades. That you have considered the topic of sufficient importance to be given the entire session in your intermediate section this morning is a triumph in progress, not only for your committee but for elementary education as well.

Because a school paper is based on the needs of any wide-awake community, because, with the exception of letter-writing, it is the best motivation available for composition work, because such an enterprise helps to mould school and class spirit, and because it furnishes experience in the practice of business-like methods, it is highly desirable as an activity for children.

Since we can always give more real help from what we have actually experienced than in any other way, I shall tell you of a classroom experiment worked out several years ago by a sixth grade of mine in the summer schools of Peabody Demonstration School. The personnel of that class was varied in ability as the local pupils came from public and parochial schools, while others, from many different states, enrolled there while their parents attended the summer session at Peabody College. Incidentally, only two had ever known of a paper in their schools, and those had not contributed to it in any way. Obviously we had no traditions to hinder or aid us.

1. The contents of this article were given as a talk before the Intermediate Section of the Tennessee Educational Association in Nashville, April, 1931.

Children's Plans

One of the first steps the children decided to take was to appeal to the other grades for material. Next, they suggested that advertisements might be used to pay expenses. Third, they thought some of the students in college classes who were constant observers in the room could be counted on as possible subscribers.

A name seemed to be a necessity and everyone had the privilege of turning in as many as he cared to. The children voted for their favorites. With many in the contest, THE PEABODY NEWS was finally chosen. No sooner had that been done than the different departments of the paper came up for discussion. Stories, editorials, poetry, school news, jokes and advertisements made up the initial list.

Oral Work

If an audience situation is desirable in school, certainly the first steps in launching a paper are excellent to promote effort on the children's part. Since all grades were to be invited to contribute, there was an element of choice as to what grade pupils the sixth grade would select. The class was divided into groups and those who preferred to ask the kindergarten children to participate tried to plan their talks to suit young children, while others attempted to appeal to older ones. From the number who tried out for each room, the children selected those who seemed the best.

When requests for advertisements seemed advisable, they talked over qualifications for a person serving in the capacity of solicitor. The one who planned to ask for the advertisement appeared on trial before the class with

one of his classmates in the rôle of merchant. Among the pseudo-shopmen, some were courteous, some feigned indifference and others pretended to be fundamentally opposed to buying space in our paper.

Different reactions to these situations formed an interesting phase of child psychology. Some of the youngsters who could not qualify as ad-getters had a chance to try for the college class subscriptions instead.

Other chances for oral discussion came when the young salesmen returned from the business world to report their success or failure in securing advertisements and to relate their experiences, and in the informal conversation that arose around the editorial table when the staff met.

Written Work

In written composition, the most important work was naturally the articles written for the paper. In order to have perfect fairness in the selection of material, the children's papers, identified by numbers instead of names, were read to the class by the teacher as soon after they had been written as possible. The children judged them by the criteria they had built up for such work and, by a vote of all, the best ones were chosen. When happenings in school were a bit difficult to relate, they were assigned to groups. All children in each group wrote the event and then the best parts of each paper were used. A few friendly notes, sent with complimentary copies, also had to be written.

An effort was made to have all pupils read proof of their own articles. Since that time I have learned many means of securing satisfactory results in the formation of this important habit. But for this particular venture anything done outside of staff meetings was negligible. Work of this kind is of slow growth but tremendously worth while.

Our first papers were made on stencils and mimeographed. Therefore, it seemed wise to have the children assemble and distribute the papers as well as to sell them on the campus.

Results

When the first issue was finally in the children's hands, the only natural course was to let them stop whatever they were doing and read it through. Just pride in their first real accomplishment was given every chance for expression; then, "How may we improve our next issue?" was the next question. With enthusiasm high, you can imagine how serious they were in their desire to make the next number better. The fruition of their ideas was shown in the following ways:

1. There was twice as much copy contributed for the July issue.
2. A marked improvement in quality was noticeable.
3. The subscription was almost doubled.
4. Three issues were published that summer.
5. Over fifty dollars cleared from the sales was deposited in the savings bank.
6. Genuine pleasure in the undertaking was evident among the children.
7. A definite school spirit was bred in them, culminating in merited delight when the principal asked that the paper become a regular project in the winter school.

Principles Underlying Success of a School Paper

In my experience then and with other papers since that time, it seems that there are definite principles underlying success in such a venture.

1. It must be managed as nearly as possible by the children.
2. It must at all times be financed in such a way as to make, at least, expenses.
3. It must be the children's own spontaneous work, done, unaided, in the classroom, never at home.
4. All material should be chosen anonymously by the pupils, taking care to have them gain in discrimination as they continue.

5. Always it should be criticized after each issue in order to promote growth; the introduction of new features should be encouraged.
6. There should be as many forms of creative work as finances will allow.
7. It should have at least one contribution from each pupil in the school during the year.

Selections from a Composite Issue

After the PEABODY NEWS had been in existence for two years, a composite issue of the best articles of each type was made up.² A few of these will be given now.³

No editor of a magazine column of "Books Just Received" ever had greater delight in a real book than our children did when the incident that made this first article possible occurred.

JANE ROLLER'S DIARY

We have been looking over the bound letters of Jane Roller, a pupil of the Third Grade who spent last year in Massachusetts while her father, Mr. Roller, was studying at Harvard University. While there she sent her grandmother a letter each week. In some of the many historical places of interest she obtained pictures for her book. Among them were the homes of Hawthorne, Aldrich, Longfellow, Alcott and Peabody. There were also pictures of some famous buildings and monuments in it. As she dictated these weekly letters her father wrote them. Her grandmother saved them and now they are bound in leather. On this book is inscribed "My New England Diary." We have enjoyed it and are proud of Jane for her accomplishment.

A. R. H.

Here is an editorial resulting from enervating spring days:

SPRING FEVER

Have you ever had a lazy feeling in the spring? O, I can't hurry up. No, I'm not lazy, I'm just, I'm just, O, I don't know but I'm not lazy. No, I haven't the mumps, nor the measles, nor the chicken pox. O dear, what have I? I haven't a yellow tongue, nor a temperature. I don't ache anywhere. What have I? Spring fever? O, of

2. Choices were based on the children's and teacher's judgments and the verdict of several English classes of the author and other instructors.

3. These will appear in *THE SUPERVISION AND TEACHING OF ENGLISH* soon to be published by Miss Elizabeth W. Baker and the author. Johnson Publishing Company.

course! Why couldn't I think of that before? Because I had it.

Claire Lynch, Sixth Grade

In an attempt to avoid the senseless columns in which all jokes are copied from other sources, we undertook to have children give funny incidents in their own experiences or those of their playmates. It was uphill business but the one following is an example of what they turned in.

A BANKER

My little brother, Ernest, is but three years old, but he is always talking about what he is going to do when he gets to be a "big man." One night Daddy asked him what he was going to do when he got big to support his family. Ernest answered proudly, "I am going to be a banker." "A banker?" said Daddy, somewhat surprised as he was not in the business and did not know where Ernest had heard of one. "Yes," said my brother, "so that I can bank the fire at night."

Jane Allen, Sixth Grade

During the Christmas vacation in 1926, Nashville suffered from one of the worst floods in its history. When Miss Harris' fourth grade pupils were writing some experiences of theirs after the holidays, the one about a bull seemed to prove that when a child of any grade has anything to tell he can write at length. Judged by the Hosc Standards, this is far above fourth grade level and, while we do not attempt such length as a general thing, it is illuminating to see it occasionally. Incidentally, the occurrence about which Glenn wrote had been photographed for a local paper.

THE BULL

We had a herd of cattle. In all there were about twenty-three. They were in the woods barn when the flood came. It came so suddenly we didn't have time to get them out. So they all drowned except the bull. We went over there in a canoe and to our surprise we found him in the trough with his back against the loft floor. There was a dead cow floating on top of the water, so we fed him on her back. The barn doors were open when we left. The next morning we went over there and found him on a straw stack eating straw. It was an unusually big one, so I should think he had a hard time getting up there. He would stand up and look toward the

other cows and hear them low. We thought he was going to come home for a while, but he stayed up there till the flood went down. Now he is over in the woods living on the straw stack that saved his life in time of high water.

Glenn Henderson, Fourth Grade

"My Worms" was written by a boy who, for want of interest, had never contributed to the paper until he experienced the following.

MY WORMS

The other day I was reading in a book about butterflies and happened to run across a paragraph on raising caterpillars to moths and butterflies. I thought I would try it. Out I went and got some with the leaves.

They fed on them and I put them in a glass bowl with wire over the top. No sooner had I put them in than they began to eat. They fed on nothing but leaves. I put some fresh leaves in every day. Yesterday one was up on the wire when I came in. I thought he was trying to get out. So I blew at him but he would not come down. So I left him alone and last night he had clung by something that came from his mouth. This morning something was coming out all over him and by this afternoon he will be a cocoon.

Marshall Gaither, Sixth Grade

The quality of written composition in summer school was not comparable with work done by children in the regular school year, but the one on the amateur rodeo shows at least an unusual but childlike ending.⁴

THE RODEO IN OUR BARN

One day while everyone was gone excepting my brother and me, we did not have anything to do so we decided to have a rodeo. We caught our ponies and the calves. There was a boy who lived on the next farm so we matched to see who should go to get him. We got everything ready even to having our lasso made out of plow lines. After it had started my brother got thrown but we did not stop for that because they don't stop for that in real rodeos. We had a great deal of fun that day. The close of the performance was making a ring with the rope when you were standing in the middle of it.

Tom DeMoss, Sixth Grade

School Papers in Other Cities

In collecting material on this subject, an attempt was made to secure some of the best elementary school papers in the country. It

4. Others not appearing here were also read before the group.

was difficult because of the scant attention given to this phase of composition work. Then, too, in many schools where situations are conducive to growth, the papers have been allowed to drift along mediocre lines either through sheer inertia or a lack of knowledge of how to secure improvement.

From about thirty-five received, the best of several types may interest you.⁵

THE ELEMENTARY TRAINING SCHOOL LIFE from Greeley, Colorado exemplifies the kind of work possible in the training school of a teacher's college.

ETHICAL EXTRA of the Ethical Culture School of New York City, unusual in appearance and content, reflecting the school curriculum as a paper should do, is published when enough high-class material is available. Naturally, this kind of magazine serves an entirely different purpose from a weekly edition in a grade.

THE BRONXVILLE SCHOOLS BULLETIN SERIES has a number entitled "Creative Activities,"⁶ specializing in work in composition and art.

ODDS AND ENDS, a newsheet of the Woodcrest School of Los Angeles, attempts a weekly page of children's work.

THE EMMET FIELD NEWS, a mimeographed sheet published by the school of that name in Louisville, Kentucky emphasizes art work done by the children.

A paper of interest to those of you who are in rural communities is THE CATONIAN published in Catonsville, Maryland.

THE PARKER WEEKLY⁷ has a leaflet on its financial and editorial policies most helpful for teachers.

With a challenge to all of us to encourage our children to make renewed efforts next year, we hope to build up an exchange of work similar to what high school teachers have had in operation for years.

5. Copies of all those received were displayed in the room and teachers inspected them after the meeting.

6. BRONXVILLE SCHOOLS BULLETIN No. 9, June 1928, Bronxville, New York.

7. THE PARKER WEEKLY, "The Organization and History of the School Paper," Francis Parker School, Chicago, Illinois. Price fifteen cents.

Achievements in English Under the Activity Program*

CATHERINE SOMERS ATWATER

Fifth and Sixth Grade Supervisor, Los Angeles City Schools
Los Angeles, California

WE may expect higher levels of achievement under a sound activity procedure than the formal school program for several reasons:

We are harnessing up a tremendous driving power from within the child which carries him to higher levels of achievement than either he or we ever considered possible.

The child finds release for this all-consuming drive through creative self-expression in many fields, with special emphasis on the medium of words.

The happy, informal environment of the free school tends to draw out this inner craving. The behavioristic psychologists might give us this explanation. The relaxed condition of the child's nervous system tends to make for greater ease in the formation of new neural patterns or behavior responses. To me, true English expression must always remain behavior responses to felt needs.

Perhaps the real key to the situation lies in our capitalizing on the whole child's experiences and interests through the integrated activity program. The English expression may even prove to be the integrating agent we have been seeking. Then each English situation finds its true significance: a natural phase of the whole experience as we adults know it to be in life.

From this integration point of view the English possibilities can only be appreciated by seeing the whole program in operation. Since that is impossible here today, I shall try to reproduce for you some actual situations I have found in our schools.

Last year one group of our fifth and sixth grade teachers decided that the problem of

developing and meeting true English needs centered around the organization of some kind of informal daily program which would function much like life outside of school. Some flexible scheme of conference machinery seemed necessary to meet the communication needs of the cooperative enterprise.

After some discussion of preliminary experimentation in class rooms, the group drew up its experimental program. The general plan included a series of large conferences: the early morning problem setting time, the discussion of research findings, and appreciation sharing. Small conferences were to be scheduled as the need for them arose. The written English needs were provided for by periods devoted to informational and creative writing, skills and drills.

I shall present for you here some case findings from those rooms using the experimental plan, that you may see a series of pictures showing whole program in operation. To simplify the matter, I have chosen only those fifth grade classes engaged in units on Mexican life.

Calling at the beginning of the day we find the early morning conference under way. Arthur, the chairman, is asking the group for contributions of any new materials. The discussion proceeds in open forum fashion. The teacher is seated at one of the tables toward the back of the room. She is acting now as a retiring, later as a more aggressive group member according as she senses in the group a need for her leadership.

Henry, when chosen by Arthur from the several volunteers, presents to the group a copy of Susan Smith's little book, *MADE IN MEXICO*. He tells the other children about Miss Smith's discussion on the place of art

* Read before the Elementary School Section, National Council of Teachers of English, N. E. A. Convention, Los Angeles, California, June 29, 1931.

in the life of the poorest Mexican peon: his decorative kitchen utensils, his colorful pots and pans. He indicates an especial interest in the reproductions of the modern murals with their ancient Mexican designs.

Helen, the pottery chairman, immediately becomes interested. She asks Henry if he knows whether the ancient designs are Aztec, Toltec or Mayan. She explains that her group has been much interested in getting true Aztec designs for their pottery. They have been planning to make the jars to be used in the Aztec Sun Dance by another group of girls.

Henry is puzzled. The alert teacher suggests to the chairman that it might be wise to make a research question to help Helen's people with their pottery designs. Arthur dictates the following question which the teacher adds to the other research problems on the board: What made the Aztec motifs differ from other Mexican designs?

The teacher tells us that her chief concern during this early morning conference is to establish a true speaker-audience situation. Informal conferences with the individual children beforehand serve as sufficient direction to assure a worthwhile contribution. She does not hope to eliminate all English difficulties entirely, but rather welcomes them as an opportunity for the group to set its own standards by coming to the aid of the child who is experiencing the trouble. As to the content of the contributions, she says it is easy to keep discussion around the unit when interest is at a high pitch and group time is at a premium. The problem of form is more challenging. Her group has hit upon these standards which occupy a prominent place on the board: 1. Know what you want to say. 2. Plan how you can make it most interesting to us.

Maria is next recognized by Arthur. She has a current event which she has cut from the morning paper. Holding the picture before the class, she tells of the new International Highway which is to run along Mexico's western coast. The boys become interested. Walter wonders how the engineers are

planning to have the roadway cross the mountainous section. A new research problem has crystallized.

It is apparent that the tangible material which the children have offered the group has contributed to their poise. They have not worried about what they want to say, what to do with their hands or how to stand. Their minds have been occupied with the evidence at hand. The children talked animatedly, not because it was English time, but to release an inner urge. They had something to say, and were sure the audience was vitally interested in hearing it.

Another morning we find a group of children in an earlier stage of a unit on Mexican Life. We have come to watch the second half of the early morning conference which the experimental program designates as Room Business.

The chairman asks the children to indicate by standing which job they wish to choose. He requests Marena, the secretary, to place the names on the board as the children indicate their choice. We see these captions which the teacher tells us the group has decided on the day before, at Room Business time: Mexican Potters, Serape Weavers, Antique Map Artists, Play Writers, Costume Designers, Scenery Painters.

When the names have all been placed on the board, George suggests to the room chairman that it might be wise to wait until the next day at Room Business time to elect chairmen for the groups. Then everyone might have a chance to think over who would make the best person in his committee to help the others.

The teacher tells us the following incident which illustrates the children's response to one child's need for developing initiative in English expression.

When nominations were being made for the group chairman the week before, Victor announced, "I nominate Hale for chairman because he has never said one word since he has been in our room. If he were our chairman he would *have* to talk." Hale was elected.

An unusual amount of discussion developed during his term of office. The children had sensed his need for suggestions as to how to proceed in the new situations for which he was responsible.

During the research period which follows there are more evidences of the informal personal note taking which was evident during the conferences. Those people who have succeeded in finding information vital to the group are busily tabulating findings: they note the information content and the source from which it was secured. Other children are jotting down related facts for which they sense a need, either in paragraph form or as a part of a more formal bibliography or card index file.

Quiet, animated discussions are proceeding in several small groups working on common research problems. The three boys near the window are comparing the dates of publication in their reference books with the encyclopedia to see which has the latest information.

For the After Research Conference Period we return several days later to the first group we watched to see what solution they may have found for their research problems.

Virginia announces that she has some information on Aztec art motifs. She talks from her notes. The librarian and she have found this information in the November, 1929, issue of *DESIGN*: "The Aztecs liked to use straight lines and squares like the modern art we see today. It may be a tree, a house, a temple or a mask changed into a queer square." She courteously offers the page number to Helen for her pottery group to consult in more detail. Helen thanks Virginia for her help.

Albert tells the group of an announcement he has found in the *SCHOOL ARTS MAGAZINE* advertising several color plates with true Aztec motifs.

The teacher, conscious of the written English situation arising, suggests that it might be fun to write the magazine publisher to secure the plates.

Elliott offers to write the letter, but he believes he will need some help. No one responds to the chairman's request for a helper. The teacher asks the chairman if it might not be well for everyone to spend some time in the afternoon at two o'clock to see what could be done to help Elliott with her letter. The class agree. The drill lesson in letter writing has been painlessly scheduled!

The teacher reiterates her belief that the time for greatest growth in oral English skills comes when the child is unselfconsciously talking about the activities in which he is interestingly engaged. She encourages him to take sufficient time for courtesy and good form. When he speaks to another person he calls him by name. He talks directly to the group when that constitutes his audience.

An excellent device she has found for stimulating a true audience situation still further has been to encourage those children who so desire to take rapid notes on the important developments of the day. Concentration of attention thus becomes a real necessity. During the regular written English period, later in the day, the children organize the notes into an informal diary. She permits this daily log to be an extremely personal affair with the child, not too closely supervised. With skillful handling she believes this will go far toward developing true literary style or individuality in expression.

The experimental program provides for one daily conference devoted to the sharing of experiences and contributions apart from the unit of work. The teacher of the group we are visiting tells us the offerings have included victrola records, fairy tales, stamp collections, poetry and pets.

Today we find the group on a high emotional plane, listening to Willa Mae reading Hilda Conkling's poem, "Joy." When the lyric is finished there develops only a short spontaneous discussion. John says, "I know somebody who has joy living behind her eyes." No reactions are forced. True poetry appreciation is allowed to take seed without disturbance.

The first group we visit to observe written English work is made up of very retarded over age foreign children. The teacher is at the board making the entries in the group log, which the individual children dictate to her from their notes. It is a slow process. Pedro says he would like to have her start a new paragraph telling about the Mexican sisal plant Maria brought with a piece of sisal rope this morning. The others assent. The information is incorporated in the records for the day.

The next visit is to a normal mixed group of American children. They are engaged in a variety of writing activities ranging according to their capacities. The group on the lowest ability level are organizing their individual diary notes into paragraph form. Those with more interest in factual material are writing articles for booklets with these titles: Mexican Plants, What Mexicans Eat, Animals of Mexico, Mexican Markets. The people with more literary interests are reproducing what they have read in a booklet called LEGENDS OF ANCIENT MEXICO.

The most highly gifted children are engaged in what we have been hoping to see; creative writing. We see these titles on their papers: New Adventure Tales Among the Ancient Aztecs, Cortez' Bravest Follower, The Fair God Returns to His People: A Play, Life with the Early Mayans. Attractive covers using the appropriate Mexican art motifs add to the importance of the children's literary contributions. Each story is boldly illustrated in color.

The teacher moves quietly among the children as they work. She sits down and confers with Henry, endeavoring to give him new inspiration for the last act of his play. She does not disturb Alfonso about the missing quotation marks while his pencil is feverishly moving over the Spanish soldier's adventure. That will come later. She sits with Mary who has finished her story. When she has finished reading she assures the child how much she enjoys the part which explains how the Fair God rescued his people. Then,

suggesting only one negative phase at a sitting, she ventures that it would have been much easier to read if it were divided up into different paragraphs. Mary decides to copy the story over, using a different paragraph for each new development.

As the teacher moves from one child to another today, she senses a chronic weakness in the use of quotation marks. At the end of the time devoted to writing, she appeals to the group for help, telling them of the trouble. The chairman volunteers that those people who know how to use the marks could tell the group. Fernando suggests that some time be taken tomorrow for talking the matter over together. Then everyone can have time to look it up for himself first.

Another drill lesson has been scheduled. The merits of this method of handling the drill for skills in English are obvious. Since the group senses the need for the drill, it becomes a meaningful experience. The people who have command of the skill are not bored because it is their business to help plan a drill for those who need it. Those who are helped are conscious of the contribution which the others have made for them. The drill for skills program becomes a happy co-operative enterprise instead of the old unmotivated drill we once saw around us.

Even under the extreme informality of the experimental program we decided there can be no scheduling of that highest stage of creative work, poetry writing. This rare fruit develops only in an atmosphere of perfect freedom and emerges because it must find an outlet for escape.

We find a teacher of skill and vision who is searching for the soil, confident that something will emerge. She reads to the group a short poem which she herself thoroughly enjoys. When she has finished someone asks her to read it again for them. After repeating it, she quietly places her book on the desk so as not to break the emotional tone, telling the children someone may want to write a poem now of his own.

Sea Poetry

MARGARET R. GLENN

St. Paul, Minnesota

"They that go down to the sea in ships,
that do business in great waters;
These see the works of the Lord, and
his wonders in the deep."

Psalms CVII

IT is a difficult task for the teacher of literature even to cover the necessary requirements in a given course. In order to stimulate interest in the reading of poetry for pleasure, the teacher must appeal to the worth while tastes and interests of the children.

Sea poetry carries a direct appeal to pupils in the upper grades. The wanderlust, the quest for adventure, the lure of distant places, appeal to the adolescent child. These are attributes of the poems of the sea.

A project, a note book of sea poetry, was worked out by boys in an eight grade class. The choice of work was the pupils'. A meeting of the group resulted in the following rules governing the work:

1. The best note book was to receive a prize (given by the school newspaper).
2. The books were to be illustrated.
3. The pupils were to choose the material. (The teacher was requested to give information regarding the sources.)
4. The minimum number of quotations in a book was to be thirty.
5. The part of the poem which the collector liked best was to be chosen for the note book.
6. If a pupil found an especially interesting poem, the teacher was requested to read it to the class when time was available.

7. The books were to be inspected three times during the semester. In this way the teacher could give suggestions.

The work was begun in November and completed in January. This gave time for the use of books, and did not seriously crowd other school work.

The results were far beyond the teacher's expectations. Literally the class was on the ocean more than on the shore. The boys enjoyed the fresh, free, fluent quality of much of the sea poetry. A craze for sea stories developed. JIM DAVIS, TREASURE ISLAND, THE BLACK BUCCANEER, and others were never on the library shelf. A study of ancient and modern ships was another result. In the manual training class several of the boys built miniature ships.

While there was no way of measuring the lasting influences of the children's contact with the poetry, it was evident from remarks made that the search for the sea poetry meant opening the door to several books and anthologies which might not have been brought into use in any other way.

The following list of poems is suggested for this project. An attempt has been made to introduce a search for sea poems in different collections of poetry which are easily secured. A search for sea poems may result in an interest in other titles in such collections. A few anthologies of the sea are also suggested to give the students knowledge of the more complete type of specialization in poetry collections.

SEA POEMS—CLASSIFIED

1. THE CALL OF THE SEA

Sea Fever—John Masefield, THIS SINGING WORLD;
also in SAILORS' CHANTEYS by R. Frothingham

The Sea Gypsy—Richard Hovey, THIS SINGING WORLD
Apostrophe to the Ocean—Lord Byron, ONE HUNDRED AND ONE BEST POEMS; also in GOLDEN NUMBERS

A Wanderer's Song—John Masfield, THIS SINGING WORLD

The Secret of The Sea—Henry W. Longfellow, Longfellow's COMPLETE POEMS

World Below the Brine—Walt Whitman, SEA'S ANTHOLOGY by Patterson

The Sea is Mighty—Wm. C. Bryant, SEA'S ANTHOLOGY

The Sea Queen Wakes—C. P. Walley, MAGIC CASEMENTS

Spanish Waters—John Masfield, MAGIC CASEMENTS
Ships—John Masfield, NEW POETRY by Monroe & Henderson

*The Glory of Ships—Henry Van Dyke, READING AND LIVING, Book II, Hill & Lyman

Tewkesbury Road—John Masfield, MAGIC CASEMENTS

Sea Call—Margaret Widdemer, THIS SINGING WORLD
The Sea—A. C. Swinburne, THIS SINGING WORLD

II. FROM THE SHORE

By The Sea—Wm. Wordsworth, FULL FATHOM FIVE by Helen and Lewis Melville

The Light House—H. W. Longfellow, Longfellow's COMPLETE POEMS

The Old Timer—R. M. Patterson, Jr., SONGS OF THE SEA and SAILORS' CHANTEYS

The Tides—H. W. Longfellow, Longfellow's COMPLETE POEMS

Evening on the Harbor—Tunstall, ANTHOLOGY OF MAGAZINE VERSE, 1922

Dover Beach—M. Arnold, FULL FATHOM FIVE

Sea Dream—J. G. Whittier, LISTENING CHILD

Where Lies The Land—Arthur Clough, GOLDEN NUMBERS

A Visit From the Sea—R. L. Stevenson, GOLDEN NUMBERS

Sea Memories—H. W. Longfellow, GOLDEN NUMBERS
Beside The Sea—Ella Higginson, THE LISTENING CHILD

Sea Child—Bliss Carmen, THE LISTENING CHILD

III. THE VOYAGE

The Voyage—Lord Tennyson, Tennyson's POEMS

A Starry Night At Sea—T. W. Dunton, FULL FATHOM FIVE

There's Nothing Like A Ship at Sea—Harry Kemp, SONGS OF THE SEA and SAILORS' CHANTEYS

Joy of The Sea—Arthur H. Clough, FULL FATHOM FIVE

After the Sea Ship—Walt Whitman, FULL FATHOM FIVE

Taken Ship—Charles Buxton Going, SEA CHANTEYS

* Following the poem in this reader are excellent suggestions for class projects of the sea.

Song From The Ship—Thomas L. Beddoes, FULL FATHOM FIVE

Those Trackless Deep—P. B. Shelley, SEA'S ANTHOLOGY

Roadways—John Masfield, MAGIC CASEMENTS

Home Thoughts from the Sea—Browning, ONE THOUSAND AND ONE POEMS

Sea Fight—Whitman, LISTENING CHILD

Taking Ship Off Shore—Walter Mitchell, GOLDEN NUMBERS

IV. IN A LIGHTER VEIN

Little Billee—W. M. Thackeray, FULL FATHOM FIVE

The Yarn of the Nancy Bell—Sir W. S. Gilbert, STORY TELLING POEMS FOR CHILDREN

A Sailor's Yarn—James Jeffrey Roche, SAILORS' CHANTEYS by Patterson

A Dash to The Pole—Wallace Irwin, SAILORS' CHANTEYS

What Ho! She Blows—Wallace Irwin, SAILORS' CHANTEYS

Billy Peg Leg's Fiddle—SAILORS' CHANTEYS

V. SEA SONGS

A Sea Song—Alice Cunningham, GOLDEN NUMBERS

Wind and Foam—Lady Lindsay, FULL FATHOM FIVE

Blow High, Blow Low—Charles Dibdin, FULL FATHOM FIVE

Ten Thousand Miles Away—Anonymous, SEA CHANTEYS

Song of The Zetland Fisherman—Sir Walter Scott, SAILORS' CHANTEYS

Blow, Boys, Blow—Am. Sailor Song (P. 7), ROLL AND GO by J. C. Calcord

Home, Dearie, Home—Am. Sailor Song (P. 8), ROLL AND GO

Clear the Track—Am. Sailor Song (P. 13), ROLL AND GO

Windless Song—Wm. Allingham, ONE THOUSAND AND ONE POEMS

VI. SHIPS

Cargoes—John Masfield, NEW POETRY; also THIS SINGING WORLD

The Coasters—Thomas F. Day, SEA CHANTEYS

The Flying Cloud—F. B. Davis, ST. NICHOLAS MAGAZINE—1928—Oct. or Nov.

With the Submarine—Don Marquis, SEA POEMS and SAILORS' CHANTEYS

Freighters—Edmund Leamy, SEA CHANTEYS

Kilmeny—Alfred Noyes, POEMS OF ALFRED NOYES

Patrolling Barnegat—Walt Whitman, SEA ANTHOLOGY

Old Ironsides—Holmes, HEART OF YOUTH

VII. THE SEA IN HISTORY

Herve Riel—R. Browning, BROWNING'S POEMS; also in SEA CHANTEYS

Ye Mariners of England—Thomas Campbell, SEA CHANTEYS; also Manley's ENGLISH PROSE AND POETRY

Editorial

"THE TRUE GEORGE WASHINGTON"

THE Washington Bi-Centennial brings to mind strange contrasts in the fame of the First President of the United States. The attempt to do reverence to his memory recalls the Washington that teachers and school books of the past five or ten years have been so diligently effacing. The question may be asked, what positive gain has been made in the fame of George Washington to compensate for the great detractions it has suffered in the attempt to remove him from the regions of myth.

There seems to be a parallel here between modern biography and modern art. Some of us will recall the incident of an award, conferred by the judges at a show of modern art, upon a painting which had been unintentionally hung upside down, and unconsciously accepted by the judges in that position. Similarly many enthusiasts for the modern note in biography have brought upon themselves the suspicion of anomalous vision. No one knows exactly what the new Washington is like — say ethically — since so much point has been made over the cherry-tree incident. One wonders whether all this proclaimed disillusionment has been so much a matter of realism in historical biography, as it has been a desire to display sophistication.

The clear image of George Washington is

blurred in present day life. The wet-dry issues of prohibition, for example, have lent a kind of fashion to ferreting out the vintages of the old wine-cellars of history. Yet not even the portraits of Washington by the great artists of his day give any hint of excessive intemperance. Have recent biographers, in attempting to make Washington "real," stamped him with the foibles of the present? No one will quarrel with the attempt to establish facts; but much present biography seems to be substituting one distortion for another. The cherry tree anecdote originated at a time of sentimentality and emotionalism in morality. The present anecdotes originate in our attitude of affected sophistication, which places emphasis upon incidents which sink character to a position of commonplaceness and triviality.

And after Washington has been made one of ten thousand of his generation, what has been the gain? Normal children have a tendency to hero-worship. In personality, in magnitude of achievement, and in distinction of character Washington was surely of heroic proportions. It is hard to reconcile some impressions of George Washington that have recently been given children with what is fair either to that great man, or to the children, who have a right to see him as he was — a national hero and human benefactor.

Reviews and Abstracts

AWAY TO SEA. By Stephen W. Meader. Illustrated. Harcourt, Brace and Company. 1931. \$2.50

Away to sea—to experience its thrills and hazards—was the dream of young Jim Slater, back in 1821, when this romantic, intensely interesting Meader yarn begins. The tug of the sea seems to have been particularly strong in the spring of '21, at least Jim felt it so keenly that he ran away from his happy Rhode Island home and shipped aboard the first vessel willing to take him. To his horror he discovered that the *White Angel* was a Yankee slaver bound for fresh human cargo, a dangerous undertaking since slaving had already been outlawed by most of the foremost nations.

Jim is a very real person. So is John James Audubon, the naturalist whom Meader works into his narrative; Captain Jethro Hack, who sits "with his head held low between hunched shoulders, like some ruffled bird of prey"; Matt Beckett, a cold, haggard member of the crew, who, like the Ancient Mariner, has a story to tell. That story is one of the most gruesome true stories ever told, already familiar in its outlines to those who have read *ADVENTURES OF AN AFRICAN SLAVER* by Captain Canot. Meader's customary skill as a story teller makes this new tale of adventure vivid and smooth running. He takes Jim over the roughest seas of his career as a seaman before the end of the book, when he leaves him on smooth waters with every hope of success ahead. The drawings by Clinton Palmer are filled with action and catch the mood of the book admirably.

—Mary Griffin Newton

THE BOX OF DAYLIGHT. By William Hurd Hillyer. Illustrated. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50

The stories in *THE BOX OF DAYLIGHT* have been 15 years in the making. They are based on the legends of the Haida, Tlingit and Tsimshian tribes of British Columbia and Prince Charlotte Island Indian tribes who seem culturally distinct in many ways from the other Indians of North America. These people have for centuries lived in wooden dwellings and used copper as a medium of exchange.

The first and longest of the stories tells of Raven, the god who took a vast interest in the earth people from the moment of their creation and who pitied them because Anvik, the great god of the Oversky Country, was so stingy of daylight that they could scarcely see to do their fishing. Raven decides to steal the box of daylight which Anvik keeps behind

the door in his house, and the patience and slyness with which he sets about this thievery makes him an ideal hero for a people who are good huntsmen. In this one tale is a complete Indian account of creation, an immaculate conception and an earth journey of a god to help men to greater happiness. Following it are other stories of the Raven's exploits to assist men—his conquest of the salmon, halibut and of fresh water and of fire. It is the Raven who succeeds in regulating the seasons and taming the tides.

Mr. Hillyer keeps all the feeling of the oldtime Indian legends but purposely avoids the inconsistencies that abound in the original myths. His fascinating collection is a choice of the Junior Literary Guild.

—Mary Griffin Newton

ARCHAIC GREECE. By Marjorie and C. H. B. Quennell. Illustrated. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1931. \$2.50

"It was not only our fate which was settled between 560 and 480 B. C. but the mode of our lives, the color of our thoughts, and the fashion of our buildings."

This short, live sentence in the introduction to *ARCHAIC GREECE* is provocative enough to kindle the reader's interest in the pages to follow, for it touches home, things that are being done, things that are concerning us now and here. Written and illustrated by an architect and a painter, this comprehensive book follows *EVERYDAY LIFE IN HOMERIC GREECE* and is second in a series of three instructive volumes on Greece by the same authors. It begins with a brief summary of the great work of Herodotus, the father of historians, tracing the events between the Golden Age and the Battle of Salamis in 480 B. C. when the Persians were defeated by the Greeks. Then comes a minute and interesting examination of the temple and the house, and of the indoor and outdoor life of the Greeks in the period preceding the Battle of Salamis. The authors describe the way in which the Greeks of early days cooked, how they were educated, how they dressed. The trade, sports and arts of the health loving, beauty loving Greek are fully considered.

The Quennells are already authors of six volumes in their "Every Day Life" series, in which they hope to give the reader of high school age an interesting account of man's existence from the old stone age to the end of the Renaissance.

—Mary Griffin Newton

(Continued from page 30)

backing. She handled the part of a man excellently and I've noticed that she is more popular with other girls now. The English club has taught me to be industrious, obliging, has increased my popularity, and brought a sincere interest in dramatics.

6. For many years when we had nominations for officers I would breathe a sigh of relief when I was not nominated. This year I watched the president conduct the meeting carefully. When he was changed to another class I was elected president. I now laugh at the thought of trembling when nominations were in order.

7. I learned many things in the English club. I once had a grudge against a certain boy in our room. After his second English club program, in which he showed a lot of pep, I began to like him and now he is one of my best friends. I once

had a jealous feeling against a certain group of people which I soon abolished.

Conclusion

The above findings seem to point to the conclusion that children improve in character and personality when given the opportunity to work in groups in order to present original programs. Specific guidance must be given by the teacher when needed but children can learn to solve many of their problems, to carry responsibilities, and to get along with others. The experience of giving some presentation before a class helps them to gain poise and self confidence, both of which are essential to mental health and personality.

THE OHIO RIVER VALLEY IN SONG AND STORY

(Continued from page 33)

stantiate the stories of murder and betrayal. Stephen Meader has drawn upon these old tales of river trade for his *LONGSHANKS*, a story of a trip on a flatboat down the Ohio and the Mississippi to New Orleans.

After the flatboats came the steamboats and a great increase in river commerce. One of the most fascinating books on the growth of the river trade and the evolution of the steamboat is Eskew's *PAGEANT OF THE PACKETS* and the most intriguing chapter in the book is the one on the songs the negro roustabouts sang as they carried the heavy freight on and off the packets. They are songs peculiar to the steamboat; they put into words the everyday incidents and environment of the roustabout. No matter what the words were, the motions of the negroes swinging the heavy loads to their shoulders and the shuffle of their feet up or down the gang plank were in the rhythm of their songs. The harder and faster they sang, the harder and faster they worked.

Mr. Eskew says it is impossible to record these songs on paper but he succeeds admirably in transmitting the haunting quality of their rhythm. He succeeds too in creating a vivid, colorful picture of the busy river wharves in the steamboat days.

With the coming of the railways, automobiles and other modern mechanical inventions, much of the romance has left the Ohio Valley. But nothing can ever take away the glamour which old tales and legends have given to the cities and towns along the river; cities whose very names are taken from famous men who have passed that way or famous battles fought there.

BOOKS ON THE OHIO RIVER VALLEY

- Allee, Marjorie Hill—*SUSANNA AND TRISTRAM*, Houghton
- Altsheler, Joseph—*RIFLEMEN OF THE OHIO*, Appleton
- Bruce, Henry A. B.—*DANIEL BOONE AND THE WILDERNESS ROAD*, Macmillan
- Eskew, Garnett Laidlaw—*PAGEANT OF THE PACKETS*, Henry Holt
- Everson, Florence McClurg—*EARLY DAYS IN OHIO*, Dutton
- Hasbrouck, Louise Seymour—*LA SALLE*, Macmillan
- Holland, Rupert—*MAD ANTHONY*, Century
- Hopkins, Charles Edwin—*OHIO, THE BEAUTIFUL AND HISTORIC*, Page
- Hulbert, Archer Butler—*THE OHIO RIVER; A COURSE OF EMPIRE*, Putnam
- Kenton, Edna—*SIMON KENTON; HIS LIFE AND PERIOD*, Doubleday, Doran
- Meader, Stephen—*LONGSHANKS*, Harcourt
- Palmer, Frederick—*CLARK OF THE OHIO*, Dodd
- Skinner, Constance—*BECKY LANDERS, FRONTIER WARRIOR*, Macmillan
- THOMAS, LOWELL—*HERO OF VINCENNES*, Houghton

SEA POETRY

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(Continued from page 43)

The Revenge—Alfred L. Tennyson, TENNYSON'S POEMS

The Ballad of Bolivar—R. Kipling, COMPLETE POEMS, Kipling

The First American Sailor—Wallace Rice, SEA CHANTEYS

The Fighting Temeraire—Henry Newbolt

The Battle of The Baltic—T. Campbell, FULL FATHOM FIVE

Sealed Orders—E. E. Gibbs, SAILORS' CHANTEYS

Spanish Galleons—J. Dryden, SEA'S ANTHOLOGY

Trafalgar—Thomas Campbell, ONE THOUSAND AND ONE BEST POEMS

The Armada—Lord Macaulay, ONE THOUSAND AND ONE BEST POEMS

VIII. SEA PICTURES

The Ancient Mariner, a—A Stagnant Sea. b—An Ice-Bound Sea—S. T. Coleridge, Manley's ENGLISH PROSE AND POETRY; an ENGLISH ANTHOLOGY; also SEA'S ANTHOLOGY

Oread—H. D., NEW POETRY by Monroe & Henderson
The Sea-Bird to the Wave—Padraic Colum, THE NEW POETRY

All Day I Hear—James Joyce, THE NEW POETRY
The Noise of Waters—James Joyce, THIS SINGING WORLD

The Sea is a Harp—Wm. H. Hayne, SEA POEMS by Patterson

High Tide—Jean S. Untermeyer, THIS SINGING WORLD

IX. THE CRUEL SEA

The Sands of Dee—Charles Kingsley, ONE HUNDRED BEST POEMS OF ENGLAND, Henley

The Wreck of The Hesperus—H. W. Longfellow, LONGFELLOW'S POEMS

The Wreck—Hemans, SEA'S ANTHOLOGY

The Inchcape Rock—Southey, SEA'S ANTHOLOGY

Three Fishers—Charles Kingsley, FULL FATHOM FIVE

Sea Dirge—Shakespeare, BOOK OF FAMOUS VERSE

X. PIRATES AND GHOST SHIPS

Ballade of a Ship—E. A. Robinson, THIS SINGING WORLD

The Taps 'L Schooner—Kenneth Rand, SEA CHANTEYS

Drake's Drum—Sir Henry Newbolt, SAILORS' CHANTEYS

Messmates—Sir Henry Newbolt, MAGIC CASEMENTS; also SAILORS' CHANTEYS

Ghost Ships—Gordon Seagrove, SAILORS' CHANTEYS
The Golden City of St. Mary's—John Masefield, MAGIC CASEMENTS

Pirates—Alfred Noyes, NOYES POEMS; also MAGIC CASEMENTS

The Tarry Buccaneer—John Masefield, MAGIC CASEMENTS

The Port O' Missing Ships—Norah M. Holland, SAILORS' CHANTEYS

Forty Singing Seamen—Alfred Noyes, NOYES' POEMS
The Ballad of John Silver—John Masefield, MASEFIELD'S POEMS

XI. HOMEWARD BOUND

Homeward Bound—William Daniel, SAILORS' CHANTEYS

The Return—A. C. Swinburne, SAILORS' CHANTEYS
The Long Trail—R. Kipling, SAILORS' CHANTEYS

Homeward Bound—Wm. Allingham, FULL FATHOM FIVE

In Falmouth Harbour—Lionel Johnson, FULL FIVE FATHOM

ACHIEVEMENTS IN ENGLISH UNDER THE ACTIVITY PROGRAM

(Continued from page 41)

Everyone makes a brave start. While they are laboring she walks sympathetically among them, careful not to disturb the muse. After some time she announces that anyone who wishes may keep his poem for a longer time. She collects the papers without further comment. Later, when she has the leisure, she searches for evidences of talent.

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Early American Writers for Children: Part III. Lydia E. Sigourney. Bert Roller, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee.

Under the auspices of the Book Evaluation Committee of the American Library Association:—Lewis Carroll, *Friend of Children*, 1832-1932, by Elizabeth D. Briggs, Cleveland Public Library; *Ohio River Valley in Song and Story*, by Marian Wadsworth, Toledo Public Library, Toledo; *Poetry for Children*, by Mildred P. Harrington, Library, Louisiana State University.

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